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1. Episode Title: Episode 53 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 53)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of the body and soul, Understanding life and death, Krishna's teachings on acceptance and duty, The concept of dharma (righteousness) in warfare, The relationship between the soul and the body

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, soul, body, acceptance, life, death, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), New things don’t necessarily give joy, and old things don’t necessarily give grief. Old is not necessarily bad, and new is not necessarily good. Arjuna is questioning this with Sri Krishna.

In Bhagavad Gita 2.22, Sri Krishna elaborates on the nature of the body. There is no need to cry over bodies or souls because souls always live. Bodies are like clothes that we wear. We wear new clothes and change them after using them for some time. We put on new ones again, and change. This repeats. How many clothes don’t we change!? Similarly, we change into so many bodies. When bodies are things that change, why cry? He said it so easily as if something that we need not ponder….

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SLOKA WORD -

vasa:msi ji:rna:ni yattha: viha:ya nava:ni gruhna:thi naro::para:ni |

thattha: sari:ra:ni: viha:ya ji:rna:ni anya:ni samya:thi nava:ni de:hi: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Just as a person discards old clothes and puts on new ones, the soul discards old bodies and takes on new ones.

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He stated that because we leave bodies just as we leave a used object, we must not worry about those bodies. Arjuna stopped Him here. You are speaking of acceptance of leaving old used bodies. However, are there only old used bodies on this battlefield? There may be a few old people. There are so many youth, middle-aged, and children as well. Don’t we feel sad to lose such people? Why do you say ji:rna vasthra (old and used bodies)? He asks!

Then, Krishna articulates with precision using the teachings of pu:rva a:cha:ryas (previous teachers). Any of the bodies can be called ji:rna vasthra! When will something become ji:rna vasthra? When something is used to the extent for which it is made, it is ji:rnam (old). When it is used the number of times it was intended for, it is ji:rnam. Doctors these days are using single-use disposable syringes. Once used to inject, it cannot be used again for another person. Do we question anyone about why it’s being disposed of after a single use? The needle still looks okay, still able to pierce. We are not asking for it to be sterilized and reused, are we? Because it is dangerous. Even more dangerous considering COVID. It cannot be used for another person or even the same person. Why? Its very purpose was single-use. Hence, it must be disposed of after a single use no matter what its state.

We know of surgical gloves for hands. They may look fine after using them once for surgery. However, they get disposed of immediately. With COVID, there are PPEs (personal protective equipment). They are worn as external bodies. After using them for a specified time and purpose, they are meant to be disposed of carefully. They are not meant to be reused. Though they look good, their purpose is for a single use and hence not reusable. Therefore, they are considered ji:rna (old).

We all know ice-cream cups. Once we have eaten the ice-cream, the cup might still be intact. Even the wooden spoon that comes with it looks reusable after the first use. You can wash and keep it with you, but do you? Even if you want to, people looking at you will laugh, object, and shame you. So, people throw these disposables away after using them. Right? Why? Because they are made for single-use. Therefore they must be disposed of. It’s the same with bodies. It’s not the question of a 16-year-old, 30-year-old, 40, 50, or 100 years old. The question is how long a body is meant for.

Abhimanyu died at the age of 16 on the battlefield. Arjuna wept immensely. He had already heard Bhagavad Gita. The situation brought him to experience what he had heard. He felt he could not live without his son and he kept crying. As the sun was setting, he was getting ready to lose his life as well. Sri Krishna reminded him that all these are ji:rna vasthras. He still questioned how it [Abhimanyu’s body] could be ji:rna vasthra. Maybe I [Arjuna’s body] can be considered ji:rna vasthra, but Abhimanyu was not even 16 years old, a young kid!

That’s when Sri Krishna explained - what is the meaning of ji:rna? For whatever purpose it was made, even if for 16 years duration, all it needs is a reason to retire on time. The battlefield became the grounds for such a reason [to retire]. He left [the body]. The situations leading to it may provide the reason, but the purpose was only to that extent. Thus, it means it is ready to retire from that purpose. Even if it looks fine on the surface, it must be disposed of. Therefore, vasa:msi ji:rna:ni (old clothes)…

You need not hesitate from disposing of the bodies. Furthermore, where will he go after leaving this body? This is another question. At least until now, there is a body for him. He is eating 2 or 3 times a day, moving around with relatives and all. He is moving around in human form. Once he leaves this body, is there a guarantee that he will come back as a human being? Or is there a guarantee that he will get a better body? No! Then, how can one be ready to leave the current state? Because if he gets a worse body, what is the use of leaving it? Who will want to leave in such a case? Is that necessary?

An analogy…there is someone living in a small hut. He lives with the sun and the moon in it, the roof as barely a few palm leaves. He was adjusting. In the same town, a new jail was constructed with a strong foundation. Why do you want to live in that poor hut? We built a nice jail for you, why don’t you come in and live there? If someone asks him that, would it become an acceptable offer? He will not be interested just because it is new, unless it gives happiness. If it is a worse place, would anyone leave their home and go there?

Let’s say someone was moving around in his not-so-great clothes, soiled, worn out, and torn. Another person says that he would give him new clothes made of jute fiber. Change to those new ones. Will he take it? When one has the assurance of obtaining something better than current possessions, he will look forward to it. He may not look forward, because whatever he has currently is fine. He would not have the current state once it’s gone. So, one would not be ready for change. If it is to bring pain, he wouldn’t even think about wanting it.

Elders gave us the answer for this. When one sheds body while carrying out his responsibilities, in this case fighting the dharma yuddha (righteous war)…

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SLOKA WORD -

ramani:ya:m yo:nim a:padyanthe:

SLOKA MEANING -

…he will attain a comparatively more qualified, greater, beautiful body than the current one.

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One who sheds the body fighting adharma yuddha (unrighteous war) will have hard times. One who fights dharma yuddha will not have any limitations. Isn’t this dharma yuddha? You did not want this to happen. The situation came up by itself. When one exercises his duties and wages war in such situations… The duty here [for Arjuna] is to fight in the war. It could be something else for another. Whoever sheds their body for some reason while carrying out their responsibility will attain a better body than the current one. Sa:sthra (scripture), the ultimate science, declares that he gets a ramani:ya (wonderful) body.

Therefore, there is no need to be worried.

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SLOKA WORD -

nava:ni gruhna:thi naro::para:ni

SLOKA MEANING -

One who fights in dharma yuddha will also attain and ‘put on’ a new, better, more beautiful body just as you would change into new clothes.

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There is no need to cry! What He did was elaborate on the nature of the soul and concluded there is no need to cry…. the nature of the body and concluded there is no need to cry. There is a great dhvani (meaning), profound meaning, here. What is it? God is in fact the owner of this (body). We are residing in this house. This house was bestowed to us because God has given it. We did not submit any application to get it. We just happened to be in this.

After a certain while, we attained knowledge about its nature, probably due to some teachings or some other reasons. It is not something that was natural to us or something we sought for. He gave it. Hence, it's His. You are in it. So, you are a resident. He is the owner. If you obey the orders of the owner and live in accordance with His wish, He will always give you joy. The owner will grant you what you wish for.

Whoever attains this knowledge that this is a vasthra (clothing), de:ha (body), and that the owner is God… any owner would give good ‘clothes’, valuable ‘clothes’, to those He likes. He (the owner) lets the others also stay in the house as part of the family out of compulsion, but not with interest. Some behave this way. Right? Similarly, because He is the one who is giving us all this, if we can live in line with Him and try to attain knowledge in the manner He recommends… He will give good ‘clothes’ to all of us.

What it means is that He will definitely grace us with a better body than the current one, better experience than the current one, the greatest ‘pleasures’ compared to the current ones. As part of 2.22, He explains that when you are in accordance with the owner, He will grant and grace you with great ‘clothes’, letting you shine and experience joy. If God is happy, He will give you a de:ha (body) that is suitable to reside in His divine abode, known as Paramapadam (supreme abode) or Sri Vaikuntam (heaven), and grace you to an equally blissful state as His.

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SLOKA WORD -

mama sa:dharmyam a:gatha:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

Whatever body and joy that I possess, you will get the same kind of body and joy.

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You will not need to reside in the cycle of srusti (creation), and pralayam (dissolution). Therefore, be in line and in accordance with the owner, God. He Himself is sitting in front as Sri Krishna and ordering Arjuna to fulfill his responsibility. He is ordering him to perform his duty, encouraging him to wage war! It is Arjuna’s duty to do so without any hesitation. It is the same for us. Whatever is our duty assigned by vidhi (law of existence), we must do it with no hesitation. If we perform accordingly, He will then give us better bodies. This body will be ‘gone’ after a while. Because we want a better body than this, He will carefully drive us accordingly. This is the dhvani clearly seen in the verse. He moves forward elaborating further on the soul's nature. Let’s listen in. Jai Srimannarayana!

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